

CASTLE WARD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

AIRPORT HEALTH AUTHORITY - NEWCASTLE AIRPORT

R E P O R T

OF THE

A I R P O R T M E D I C A L O F F I C E R

FOR THE YEAR 1971

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OFFICERS OF CASTLE WARD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILPUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Acting Medical Officer of Health and Deputy Airport Medical Officer	H.J.NICHOLSON, M.B., Ch.B.
Deputy Airport Medical Officers	W.LATIMER,M.B.,B.S. (Resigned 5.11.71) P.J.BURNETT, M.B.,B.S.,D.R.C.O.G.,
Chief Public Health Inspector and Cleansing Superintendent	E.W.STRACHAN, M.R.S.H.,M.A.P.H.I.
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The North East Regional Airport is at Woolsington and its public health control has been in the hands of this council since 1966. Previously it was a municipal airport, and the public health control was the responsibility of Newcastle Corporation. For purposes of International travel, the airport is known as Newcastle Airport.

The airport is a modern one and the new terminal and control buildings were completed in 1967. The runway is now 7,600 feet, and the airport is capable of handling most types of aircraft.

The health control unit is situated on the apron and passengers can be taken there immediately from the aircraft, that is before going to customs and immigration control. The unit consists of a main hall where passengers' documents (e.g. vaccination certificates) can be rapidly inspected and destination addresses can be noted. Off this hall are medical and examination rooms. Here the medical inspection of aliens can be carried out, and indeed any medical examination of personnel. There is also an isolation room for cases of infectious disease and an ambulance room for the treatment of casualties. Both the isolation room and the ambulance room have double doors, outside which ambulances can draw up.

Basic Statistics for Year Ending 31st December 1971

		<u>Arrivals</u>	<u>Departures</u>
<u>Aircraft:</u>	Domestic	2,751	2,746
	International	1,408	1,396
<u>Passengers:</u>	Domestic	138,668	137,727
	International	88,790	90,694
<u>Total freight:</u>	3,093 short tons		

Most of the freight is carried to and from London Airport, although any scheduled flight may carry some freight. The bulk of the freight is machinery and electrical parts, clothing, pharmaceuticals and a small quantity of luxury food.

Apart from one or two flights to North America, all the flights abroad are to Europe - the bulk of them to airports serving holiday resorts in Spain and Italy. There is a week day service to and from Amsterdam and a twice weekly summer service to Kristiansand in Norway.

Water

Drinking water is taken aboard in one-gallon containers obtained from the domestic supply. Most of this is boiling water used for making coffee.

Water for washing and cleansing is again taken from the public supply and pumped into tanks in the aircraft from a special container on wheels.

Food

Scottish and Newcastle Breweries have a flight catering department at the airport. Cold meals are freshly prepared. On some flights re-heated frozen meals are used. These are prepared at the flight catering unit. This food is heated on the planes immediately prior to consumption.

Sewage Disposal

Sewage from the aircraft is treated chemically and the tanks are emptied and re-charged from another special container on wheels. The containers are emptied at a special building on the periphery of the airport which contains a tank and a maceration unit. Sewage is then discharged into the public sewer.

Public Health (Aircraft Regulations) 1970List of Infectious Areas

A list of scheduled flights is received from time to time. Lists of chartered flights are also received. The operating companies, flight control, H.M. Customs and Excise and H.M. Immigration have all been asked to let the Health Department know as soon as possible about any unscheduled flight from outside Europe. In the last six years the only flights from outside Europe have been from North America.

If any part of Europe is declared a locally infected area, the Airport Authority, H.M. Customs, and the operating companies are immediately informed. Arrangements are then put in hand either for meeting the aircraft or getting the passengers to fill in a form on flight.

Radio Messages

It is usually possible to have advance notice of aircraft arriving when there is a suspected case of infectious disease aboard. The Health Control at Amsterdam inform H.M. Customs or Immigration if a passenger has boarded an aircraft bound for Newcastle having arrived in Amsterdam from the Far East without a valid vaccination certificate.

Hospital Accommodation

Hospital accommodation for infectious disease is provided at the Infectious Diseases Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead. The consultant in charge is Dr. A. E. Paxton.

Surveillance and Follow up of Contacts

At the health control unit a supply of forms is kept so that the names and addresses of incoming passengers can be quickly recorded. A small amount of equipment is kept for taking laboratory specimens. The work of informing Medical Officers of Health at destination addresses is undertaken at the District Council Offices.

Cleansing and Disinfestation

No facilities exist at Newcastle Airport for the complete disinfection or disinfestation of an aircraft. The nearest airport with such facilities is Manchester.

Cleansing of persons would be arranged with Newcastle Corporation who have facilities at their depot in Blenheim Street. Cleansing of clothing and other articles would be arranged with Newcastle Corporation or the local hospitals.

Cholera in Spain

On 7th September, Spain notified the World Health Organisation that cases of cholera had occurred in Barcelona and Valencia provinces. 400 - 500 travellers to the mainland of Spain go through Newcastle Airport weekly during the summer season. Weekly flights were to Gerona, Barcelona and Alicante Airports. Gerona was not affected, but persons going via Gerona Airport may go to resorts in Barcelona province. Again, persons going to Alicante may end up in Valencia province. Benidorm is also served from Alicante Airport and this resort was mentioned more than once when suspected cases of cholera were discussed in letters from the Chief Medical Officer. In view of this, it was decided to obtain details of all persons arriving from the mainland of Spain and to offer vaccination to all persons before departure.

The flights departed late Friday and Saturday nights and early Sunday morning. The medical practice who act as Deputy Airport Medical Officers attended, and departing passengers were offered a single dose of cholera vaccine on a fee paying basis. Over 400 accepted. By the end of September many other passengers had already been given vaccine by their own doctors.

All incoming passengers were given a form to fill in on flight requesting details of flights, holiday address, home address, name of own doctor, occupation, and whether in possession of a valid vaccination certificate against cholera. This was done in co-operation with the operating companies to whom thanks are due. In only one flight was it

necessary to get the incoming passengers to fill in the form at the health control unit after arrival.

The forms, up to 500 per week, were sorted out in the District Council Offices. Some 1,300 were sent to the Medical Officer of Health at the passenger's destination address. In one or two instances where the passenger was a food handler the Medical Officer of Health was notified by telephone.

At the same time as the forms were distributed to passengers they were given a short letter saying that one or two cases of cholera had occurred and asking them, if they were ill enough to see their own doctor, to show him the letter.

These arrangements continued until late October, when the Spanish authorities were able to declare the two provinces free from cholera. By this time in any case most of the holiday traffic had ceased.

This was the first major public health control exercise in connection with the airport since 1966. The help of the operating companies, the airport administration and H.M. Customs and Excise is gratefully acknowledged. The staff of Castle Ward Health Department had to absorb the very large amount of work on top of their ordinary duties, while at the same time visiting all the persons living within the district who had been put on surveillance by ourselves or by other Airport Health Authorities.

Smallpox

Langley Park Isolation Hospital, County Durham, is the designated smallpox hospital for the district, and the consultant in charge is Dr. T. A. Grimson. The hospital can be opened on two hours' notice by contacting the Senior Administrative Medical Officer of the Newcastle Regional Hospital Board or his deputy. The ambulance for the conveyance of suspected smallpox patients is provided by Durham County Ambulance Service.

Three smallpox consultants are available in the region:

	<u>Office</u>	<u>Home</u>
Dr. J. Grant	-	Low Fell 875035
Dr. T. R. Lauckner	Newcastle 38811	Whickham 887037
Dr. W. Minns	Gosforth 859011	Humshaugh 317

Laboratory facilities, including electron microscopy, are available at the public health laboratory, Newcastle General Hospital. The director of the laboratory is Dr. J. H. Hale.

A small amount of smallpox vaccine is held at the health control unit, and arrangements exist for informing other Medical Officers of Health of the need for surveillance.

Notifiable and Other Infectious Disease

During the last five years no notifiable diseases have occurred among arriving passengers. One or two calls have been received in connection with patients with enteric symptoms but these have proved negative on investigation.

Medical Inspection of Aliens and Commonwealth Immigrants

The four doctors listed on Page 1 hold certificates of appointment as Medical Inspectors of Aliens and Commonwealth Immigrants. No other staff is engaged on this work.

The medical staff are very seldom called upon by H.M. Immigration Control to carry out this work, as very few long-stay immigrants arrive via this airport. The immigration officers have the telephone numbers of the four medical inspectors, and it is usually possible for a doctor to attend within a few minutes of receiving a call.

Statistics

Total number of arriving Commonwealth citizens subject to control under the Act 1969	426
Total number of Commonwealth citizens medically examined	2
Total number of aircraft carrying aliens	468
Total number of arriving aliens (excluding crews)	6,195
Total number of aliens medically examined	5

